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DANIEL P. COOK

BY JOSEPHINE E. BURNS.

Daniel Pope Cook was one of the first Illinois statesmen. His career, though short in years, was at a time when men, broad in mind and heart, were necessary. It was under the leadership of such men as he, that the state was established and nurtured during the first few years of its existence. To such men as he, the Illinois of today owes much for the firm foundation laid during the first decade, and for the greatness of the modern commonwealth.

Daniel P. Cook was not an Illinoisan by birth. He was, however, not unique in this respect, because a large number of the earlier statesmen migrated to the State from some of the older states—principally those to the south. Cook was born in Kentucky in 1794.¹ There he spent his boyhood. Frail and delicate, he was unable to take full advantage even of the meagre educational advantages offered.² His parents were poor, and unable to help him in securing a higher education. All the schooling he had was obtained during an irregular attendance at the common schools of the vicinity in which he lived. He had no college career,³ yet despite his lack of opportunity, he was a student and a thinker. When comparatively young, he was sent to St. Genevieve, Missouri, where for a short time he worked in a shop.⁴ His ambition, however, was not satisfied there, and soon he began the study of law under his uncle, Nathaniel Pope.⁵ At the end of two years, in 1815,⁶ when twenty-one years of age, he was admitted to the bar in Kaskaskia, then capital of the territory,

¹ Moses, I, 294.

² Reynolds; Pioneer History, 332.

³ Edwards; History of Illinois, 253.

⁴ Illinois State Historical Society Publications, No. 8, 212.

⁵ Moses, I, 294.

⁶ Illinois State Historical Society Publications, No. 8, 212.

and soon established a good practice, although in those days, few men supported themselves by their professions alone.¹ He practiced law in the courts of all the organized counties of the territory except those along the Wabash. During the few succeeding years, he occupied many positions. He was twice clerk of the Territorial Legislature, which met in Kaskaskia. In 1816, he became joint owner of the *Illinois Intelligencer*, published at the territorial capital. The early files of this paper are unfortunately lost.² It, however, probably attempted little more than notices of foreign news, and advertisements of land sales. Political editorials did not appear in Illinois newspapers until the slavery struggle of 1823-4.³ During the same year Governor Edwards appointed him auditor of public accounts, but he served only a few months in that capacity.⁴ The following year he went to Washington, D. C., where, through the influence of Senator Edwards, he obtained from President Monroe a position as bearer of messages to John Quincy Adams,⁵ then minister at the court of St. James. The particular message to the minister was his summons home to become the new secretary of state. This was the beginning of the political and personal friendship which later existed between Adams and Cook, a friendship which gave Mr. Adams the presidency. In the presidential election in the House of Representatives in 1825, Mr. Cook, the single congressman from Illinois, cast the vote of the State for Mr. Adams, and thus made him president of the United States. After their return to America, Adams endeavored to gain for his friend from Monroe an appointment as secretary of the territory of Alabama. Cook's health was not good, and it was hoped that the southern climate would improve it. Monroe unfortunately having already promised the appointment to another, could not grant the request, but expressed the hope that Cook might sometime have an appointment.⁶ In 1818 the appointment came, making him a federal

¹ Edwards' History of Illinois, 254.

² *Ibid.*, 254.

³ Illinois State Historical Society Publications, No. 9, 205.

⁴ Illinois State Historical Society Publications, No. 9, 205.

⁵ Illinois State Historical Society Publications, No. 8, 212.

⁶ Edwards' History of Illinois, 271.

judge in the western circuit of Illinois.¹ The district contained the counties of Bond, Madison, St. Clair, Randolph and Monroe, comprising one-third of the present limits of the state. He held this office for a short time only, probably not more than a term or two; but even in those few months, he gained an enviable reputation.² That same year the state was organized, and under the new regime, he was elected attorney-general by the State Legislature.³ This office he held from December, 1818, to October, 1819. During this same year he first became a candidate for representative in the national legislature.⁴ At this point began his real political career. Before this his pursuits were rather scattered in nature. He had a great ambition to be and to do, but this turning of his ambition toward a single goal, brought out the best that was in him.

Before writing further of his term of congressional activity, it might be well to consider briefly the character and personality of Daniel P. Cook, for both were powerful elements in his political success. Physically he was frail and delicate, never enjoying good health. His whole career was hampered by disease. In manner he was modest and diffident, yet withal, possessed a charming ability in conversation. His voice was soft and melodious, and his speech fluent. Ford says of him:⁵

“Mr. Cook was a man of eminent talents and accomplishments. In person he was small. He was a man of great social powers, wholly without guile; and kindness, sincerity and truth animated every motion of his body, making his face to shine, and giving his manners a grace and a charm which the highest breeding will not always give. He was a complete gentleman, and in all his electioneering intercourse with the people, he had the rare talent of making himself singularly acceptable and agreeable, without stooping to anything low, or relaxing in the slightest degree, the decorum or

¹ Illinois State Historical Society Publications, No. 8, 212.

² Reynolds' History of Illinois, 332.

³ Edwards' History of Illinois, 254.

⁴ Illinois State Historical Society Publications, No. 8, 212.

⁵ Ford's History of Illinois, 73.

the carriage of a high-bred gentleman. His mind was uncommonly supple, wiry and active, and he could, as he pleased, shoot his thoughts readily over a great field of knowledge."

In his day he was undoubtedly the most popular man in the State, and well deserved the popularity. Reynolds says he was at one time the darling of his people, and that an old settler whenever his name was mentioned, would involuntarily cry out, "When is the election?"¹

Illinois was organized as a State and admitted to the Union, in 1818. According to the constitution, a representative was to be chosen for the House of Representatives for a short term, from December, 1818, to March 3, 1819.² Cook became a candidate for the position. There were two parties in the State at that time, although party division lines were personal rather than political. They have been characterized by the terms, the "ins" and the "outs."³ Generally, however, they were designated by the names of their leaders. The Edwards party, under the leadership of Ninian Edwards, included such men as Nathaniel Pope, Daniel P. Cook, Morris Birkbeck and Colonel Pierre Menard; while the Bond party, with Governor Bond as leader, included Elias Kent Kane, John McLean and Jesse B. Thomas. Another line of division arose from the slavery question. The Edwards party were known to be anti-slavery, the Bond faction pro-slavery.⁴ Cook came out as the Edwards representative, John McLean of Shawneetown, the Bond representative. That first election in Illinois was hotly contested, particularly for congressman. The Missouri question was, at that time absorbing attention. Naturally it entered into the Illinois election. For the first time in Illinois history, stump-speaking was a factor in the campaign. Cook assumed the anti-slavery side of the debate, McLean the pro-slavery side. Joint debates were held between the two men. Both were young lawyers, ambitious and talented. Both were eloquent speakers. It was asserted by one who heard the Cook-McLean debates as well as the

¹ Reynolds: *Pioneer History of Illinois*, 395.

² Edwards' *History of Illinois*, 355.

³ Reynolds: *My Own Life and Times*, 210.

⁴ Edwards' *History of Illinois*, 152.

Lincoln-Douglas debates, that the former did not suffer by the comparison.¹ The result of the election was a compromise between the two parties. McLean won by the small majority of fourteen. The pro-slavery party also secured Bond as governor, while the Edwards party gained the office of lieutenant-governor for Colonel Pierre Menard.

Although a young man of ability and promise, and later rather a prominent man in state history, during 1818-19, McLean lost much of his popularity.² In the short session of Congress, he antagonized many on account of his pro-slavery sentiments. He had also succeeded in alienating almost the entire body of immigrants from eastern states, so that, with Cook as his opponent, he entered the election of 1819 handicapped.³ This second election was also hotly contested, but this time resulted in a fair majority for Cook.⁴

That fall, Cook entered upon his real political career as practically the first representative of Illinois in the United States Congress. In that first session he was put on the committee of public lands, the committee in which he could do the greatest service for his people. It is interesting, in reading the records of that Congress, to notice the prominence the Illinoisan immediately assumed. His first speech was made December 27, 1819, upon the resolution for establishing territorial government in the District of Columbia.⁵ His next speech(January 4, 1820) was on a resolution which he proposed for the immediate benefit of his district. The resolution called for the investigation of the advisability of establishing a military station in the territory between the Mississippi and Ohio. His resolution, however, was not considered.⁶

The question which that year stirred not only the Congress, but the entire fabric of government to its very foundation, was the admission of Missouri. When the bill for the admission of this State was before the House in 1819, an amend-

¹ Moses: Illinois History, 294.

² Edwards: History of Illinois, 255.

³ Edwards: History of Illinois, 256.

⁴ Cook received 2,192 votes; McLean 1,559, giving to the former a majority of 633.

⁵ Annals of Congress Vol. 35, (1819-20), 798.

⁶ Annals of Congress, Vol. 35, (1819-20), 856.

ment was introduced by James Tallmadge of New York, prohibiting the introduction of slaves into the State, and providing that all children born in slavery, should become free at the age of twenty-five years. The bill, with this restriction, passed the House,¹ but the restriction was taken off by the Senate, so that the Congress adjourned without decisive action. The entire country, both north and south, was aroused for the first time over the question of human slavery. John Quincy Adams, in his *Memoirs*, mentions Cook as a speaker in the House, in favor of the restriction.² The reference to the *Annals of Congress* for the month of February proves him to have been a prominent speaker on the subject. His speech covers several pages. It is a clear exposition of his attitude upon both slavery and constitutional principles. In one place he says:³ "Away with your compromise. Let Missouri in, and the predominance of slave influence is settled, and the whole country will be overrun with it. Indeed, I am opposed to any compromise on the subject. I consider it my duty to aid in arresting an evil, and a duty of so high a nature as to amount to a constitutional duty, embraced within the oath I have taken to support that instrument."

When on March 1, 1819, the motion for striking out the restriction from the Missouri bill was put to the House, we find Cook's name among the "nays."⁴ When, however, the compromise was inserted forbidding slavery north of the line thirty-six degrees, thirty minutes, and put to a vote, Cook voted with the "yeas."⁵

These are the important measures in which Cook took part during his first session in Congress. He returned to Illinois to another campaign. His old opponent, Mr. McLean, frightened by the preceding election, refused to make the race against such a powerful adversary. The Bond party, however, did not give up the fight, and entered Elias Kent Kane as their candidate.⁶ The contest was largely personal in

1 Turner: *Rise of the New West*, 155,156.

2 Adams: *Memoirs*, IV, 518.

3 *Annals of Congress*, Vol. 35, (1819-20), 1111,

4 The vote stood 90 ayes to 87 nays.

5 *Annals of Congress*, Vol. 36, (1819-20), 1586-7.

6 Edwards: *History of Illinois*, 255.

character. Both men favored the admission of Missouri; Cook, because he thought admission the only expedient thing under the existing conditions. The contest was heated, but when the results of the election became known, it was found to be an overwhelming victory for Cook.¹

Again he returned to Congress. He had experience, and profited by it. He went back, stronger, more competent to secure for his State favorable legislation. As a young politician, he was gaining an enviable reputation at the capital. John C. Calhoun, in 1821, said of him: "For Mr. Cook, I have a most genuine respect, both for his character and talent." And again in 1822: "I take much interest in Mr. Cook's election, and shall wait with great impatience to hear the result. He is honest, capable and bold—just such a man as the times require. His absence from Congress would be a serious loss."²

John Quincy Adams in his *Memoirs* on the date March 7, 1821, writes: "Cook is a man of fair mind and honorable principles, and makes a very handsome appearance in the House as a speaker. He is yet under thirty, and gives the promise of a useful and distinguished statesman; but his health is very infirm, and his constitution so feeble that its duration is more than ordinarily doubtful."³

Judge McLean said of him: "He stands well with all parties, and is not excelled in weight of character, talents and influence by any member from the west."⁴

So it was that when he again resumed his seat in Congress, he had the prestige which his presence the preceding session had given him. The records of this time, too, reveal him as a member by no means insignificant. Among the important measures brought up at this Congress, was the final admission of Missouri. The state had drawn up its constitution and submitted it. There was a clause, however, included, giving the legislature the power to exclude forever free negroes and mu-

¹ Cook's majority was 2,482, out of less than 8,000 votes. Edwards: *History of Illinois*, 255.

² Edwards: *History of Illinois*, 271.

³ Adams: *Memoirs*, V., 320.

⁴ Moses: *History of Illinois*, 342.

lattoes from the state. Although Cook had at the time of his election declared openly his intention to vote for the admission of the state, still his name is found among the "nays." That he felt himself amply justified in his change of opinion, is evident from the speech which he made in Congress on December 13, 1820. In substance he said that:

He had given his constituents to understand that he should vote for the admission of Missouri. He had given them so to understand, even previous to his re-election to a seat in the next Congress, and the result of the election had satisfied him that his vote would not be disapproved. He considered the faith of Congress pledged, by the act of the last session, to admit Missouri, provided her constitution was made in conformity to the terms of this act, and when he had said he would vote for her admission, the declaration had always been made under the belief that such would be the case. Mr. Cook then proceeded to show why he thought the constitution submitted did not conform with the constitution of the United States, and justified his vote against the admission. He based his argument upon the clause in the constitution of the United States, which gives to Congress the power "to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory and other property of the United States." "This," he said, "is a general power, and in its exercise I apprehend that Congress has a right to dispose of that territory to whomsoever it pleases." He goes on to show that the declaration of Missouri, excluding all free negroes and mulattoes from the state, was in violation of the clause of the constitution of the United States, which guarantees to the citizens of each state all the privileges and immunities of the citizens of the several states. The government had already sold land to negroes and given them the rights of property. The constitution of Missouri would deprive them of this property. He refuted the argument that the state of Missouri would not come in with the same rights as the other states, by proving that the new state would have the same federal rights, and that federal rights were all that it was in the power of the government to bestow. He closed his speech as follows:¹

¹ *Annals of Congress*, Vol. 37, 643-648.

“My feelings are in favor of admission. Both personal and political reasons combine to render it a desirable event; and were it consistent with my sense of the duty I owe to the country and to the constitution to give such a vote, upon the resolution under consideration, I am sure no member on this floor would do it with more pleasure. But while I consider the constitution the rock upon which our temple of liberty must stand, and having sworn to support it, I feel myself called upon to forego all such considerations, and defend it against infringement.”

During this session and the following, we find Mr. Cook championing various measures. His name appears often in the records of Congress. His voice was heard upon questions of education, upon inspection of land offices, upon inspection of banks, and other measures. There was, however, in these two sessions, nothing of further great national or state importance in which he took a prominent part.

In 1821 he married Miss Julia Edwards, the eldest daughter of Senator Ninian Edwards, and thereafter the political interests of these men were closely allied.

The following summer he again entered the campaign for a seat in Congress. McLean, encouraged by the opposition aroused by Cook's Missouri vote, entered the race against him.¹ The election once more proved a success for Cook.² His activity in this Congress was not quite so great as it had been in preceding Congresses, yet in his way he served his State fully as well. Among the records of the debates in the sessions of 1822-3 and 1823-4, are found speeches made by him on a wide variety of topics. Notably among them was the measure for the repair of the Cumberland Road, showing him to be a Nationalist in principle, and in favor of internal improvement at the expense of the national government. His voice was also heard in the controversy for the settlement of land claims; in the debate on the resolution authorizing the president to recognize the independence of Greece; and in the tariff discussions.

¹ Edwards: History of Illinois, 256.

² The vote was 4,764 for Cook, 3,811 for McLean, a majority of 953 in favor of Cook.

From the eighteenth Congress, Cook returned to Illinois to perform a service for his State which alone entitles him to a place among the great men of the commonwealth. The contest was over slavery. In spite of the ordinance of 1787, slaves could be and were held in considerable numbers in Illinois. Efforts had been made on several occasions to legalize the institution in the State, but were of no avail.¹ When the constitution was drawn in 1818, slavery was prohibited. When, however, the code of laws was made, the treatment to be accorded blacks was made exceedingly harsh.² When Missouri in 1821 was admitted as a slave state, an intense pro-slavery feeling was awakened among the slave holders of Illinois. They longed for similar freedom. However, by a split in the pro-slavery party in 1822, Edward Coles, a Virginian, but intensely anti-slavery in sentiment, was elected governor. In his inaugural address, Coles recommended the emancipation of the slaves held by the French settlers, whose right to own such property had never been questioned.³ This suggestion was a fire-brand in the powder magazine. Immediately there was an effort started for a constitutional convention, to amend that instrument so as to permit the legal holding of slaves. By foul means⁴ the measure was passed by the necessary two-thirds vote of the House, and concurred in by the Senate. The matter was then before the people for decision. The call was for a constitutional convention, but every one knew that slavery was the issue. The matter was to be voted on in 1824. For the intervening eighteen months, the battle raged. Never has the State seen a more exciting campaign. Ford says that almost every stump in every county had its bellowing, indignant orator, on one side or the other.⁵ Prominent and strong men were lined up on either side. It was a battle of intellects, brain against brain.⁶ Governor Coles spent his entire four years' salary in the struggle.⁷ The prominent

¹ Moses: History of Illinois, 312.

² Illinois State Historical Society Publications, 12, 148.

³ Willson: Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America, 162-3.

⁴ Illinois State Historical Society Publications, 9, 519.

⁵ Ford: History of Illinois, 55.

⁶ Illinois State Historical Society Publications, 9, 308.

⁷ Reynolds: My Own Times, 242.

anti-slavery men were Governor Coles, Daniel P. Cook, Nathaniel Pope, Ninian Edwards, Morris Birkbeck, John M. Peck, Samuel D. Lockwood, and Henry Eddy. Against them were Elias Kent Kane, Jesse B. Thomas, John McLean, Governor Bond and Chief Justice Phillips. All of these men wrote editorials, and both factions had their newspapers.¹ Cook was the best orator on either side, and devoted his whole time to the combat.² The anti-slavery party was more energetic and better organized.³ On August 2, 1824, the election was held. The vote stood 4,972 for the convention, and 6,640 against it, an overwhelming defeat for the pro-slavery party.⁴ The people decided, however, not so much on the grounds of principle, as of expediency.⁵ The strange thing about the struggle was that the anti-slavery party was led to victory by a Virginian and a Kentuckian. The interest aroused in this election is revealed by the large vote cast. The population of Illinois by the census of 1820, was 55,162; but at the election in August, 1824, the number of votes cast for and against the convention was 11,612. In the presidential election the following November, the number of votes cast dropped to 4,707.⁶

Adlai E. Stevenson, in referring to this contest, says: "Two names come down to us out of the shadowy past, that will not be permitted to perish from the memories of the living—the one a Virginian, Edward Coles; the other a Kentuckian, Daniel P. Cook. The former, the governor of Illinois; the latter its sole representative. Courageous and untiring, they stood in the forefront, the faithful advocates of a free state."⁷

During this campaign, Cook was also adding to his chances for re-election, against Governor Bond as his opponent.⁸ His success in the fall election was largely due to his activity in the convention agitation.⁹ During his canvass, the question

¹ Davidson and Stuve: History of Illinois, 325.

² Moses: History of Illinois, 322.

³ Davidson and Stuve: History of Illinois, 325.

⁴ Illinois State Historical Society Publications, 9, 521.

⁵ Ford: History of Illinois, 55.

⁶ Davidson and Stuve: History of Illinois, 325.

⁷ Illinois State Historical Society Publications, 8, 24.

⁸ Moses: History of Illinois, 322.

⁹ Reynolds: My Own Times, 243.

of the presidential election was often referred to.

In 1824, there were four principal candidates for the presidency of the United States, and there was a strong possibility that the election should be taken to the House of Representatives. Illinois, as a State, was divided. Cook was personally a friend of John Quincy Adams, but pledged himself to vote in Congress, if the presidential election should fall to that body "in accordance with the clearly expressed sense of a majority of those whose will I shall be called upon to express."¹ Such was the case which arose. The election went to the House, and Cook was called upon to fulfill his pre-election pledge.

Adams says in his diary that Cook told him that he was pledged to vote for Jackson "if need came." At first Adams does not seem to have expected Cook's vote, but the expectation grew.² When the time came for Cook to vote in "accordance with the clearly defined sense of the majority," there was a serious doubt as to what the term "majority" might mean. There were three electoral districts in the State. Two went for Jackson, one for Adams.³ If this were the clearly expressed voice of the majority, Cook's pledge would force him to vote for Jackson. But he, instead, took the popular vote as the basis of his action. There were 4,707 votes cast for presidential elector. Of these, Adams received 1,541, Jackson 1,273, Clay 1,046, and Crawford 218. Besides these votes, clearly expressed for one or another of the candidates, one James Turney received 629 votes, as an elector. Just what role he was to play is a little difficult to say. He may have been originally a Crawford man, and if such were the case, would not effect the difference between Adams and Jackson. Professedly, however, he was for Clay and Jackson. Even if Jackson had received all of Turney's votes, he would not have had a majority. Adams, of all the clearly undisputed votes, received a plurality, and in accordance with this, Cook cast his vote in the House for Adams.⁴ The vote

¹ Davidson and Stuve: *History of Illinois*, 336.

² Adams: *Memoirs*, Vol. 6, pp. 443, 476.

³ Davidson and Stuve: *History of Illinois*, 337.

⁴ Edwards: *History of Illinois*, 261.

was very close, Adams having a majority of one only. He received the votes of thirteen states, Jackson of seven, and Crawford of four.¹ McLean, then in the Senate, wrote the following despatch, which shows something of the feeling aroused by the election:

“Senate Chamber:

February 9, 1825.

Sir,—

The votes for president are as follows: Mr. Adams, the six New England States, New York, Maryland, Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Alabama and Kentucky. He is elected. The mail starts. I have time to write no more. Great God deliver us.

JOHN McLEAN.”

The measures participated in by Cook during his last term in Congress were numerous and important. He was active in gaining the extension of the Cumberland Road through to Vandalia. He was again prominent in the settlement of land claims. The second year of this Congress, he was virtually the chairman of the ways and means committee. McLane of Delaware was the appointed chairman, but was absent almost the entire session, and the important duties of his position devolved upon Cook, whose name was second on the committee.²

His last term in Congress was marked by a signal victory, in securing a measure for which he had been struggling the whole course of his Congressional career—namely, a grant from Congress adequate to warrant the construction of the Illinois-Michigan canal. Soon after 1818, the canal spirit had risen in Illinois.³ The Chicago massacre of 1812 had emphasized the need of closer communication. In Illinois, the canal was favored in the east and west, and opposed in the south. There was no north at that time. The matter was discussed by the State Legislature. In 1822, Cook took the plea to Congress. All the encouragement he received there

¹ Congressional Debates, I, (1824-5), 527.

² Edwards: History of Illinois, 267.

³ Edwards: History of Illinois, 259.

was a rather doubtful grant of a strip fifty feet wide on either side of the proposed canal. The government was in no way to assume any of the responsibility or expense of the construction. The appropriation, also, reserved from sale, the lands through which it might pass, till further direction.¹ The State was given the privilege of taking material for its construction from government land.

Governor Coles and ex-Governor Bond both espoused the cause of the canal, and enthusiasm for it grew. The Legislature of 1822-3 appointed canal commissioners, and men were employed to examine the ground, and estimate the time and money necessary for its construction. The examination, however, was superficial, and far from represented the true requirements of the case. In January, 1825, a corporation was formed, called the Illinois and Michigan Canal Association, with a capital of \$1,000,000. This Association was to complete the canal in ten years, and in return was to receive payments for public lands, and all tolls for a period of fifty years, Cook opposed this measure bitterly, and finally succeeded in arousing the Legislature to repeal the charter. No stock had been sold, and the Company was easily persuaded to surrender the charter. In January, 1826, an able memorial, largely Cook's work, was forwarded to Congress. There, with Cook in the House of Representatives, and Thomas and Kane in the Senate, a suitable appropriation at last was gained on March 2, 1827.

The grant included the land on either side of the proposed canal, alternate five sections. This included a tract of 224,322 acres of land in which Chicago is situated.² This was given in fee simple, without reservation. The canal was to be commenced within five years, and completed in twenty-five years. Otherwise the lands were to revert to the government, and the State was to be responsible for returns of lands already sold. This was the beginning of the Illinois-Michigan canal. In an address of Cook to the people in October, 1825, he pleads for the canal:³

¹ Davidson and Stuve: History of Illinois, 475.

² Davidson and Stuve: History of Illinois, 475, *et seq.*

³ Edwards: History of Illinois, 173.

“This is a work in which the nation is interested, and which the general government should, therefore, aid in executing. As a ligament to bind the Union together, no work of the same magnitude can be more useful. Occupying as Illinois and Missouri do, a central position in the great semi-circle of states on the north and west, and commanding as they do, the commerce of three great rivers of the west, the Ohio, the Mississippi and the Missouri, they may well be called the keystone of the widely projected arch. From New York to Louisiana, following the frontier curve of that portion of the Union, in the event of any political commotion or attempt at separation, the influence of these states would, ere long, be sensibly felt, and would even decide the contest. And their interest will be so happily balanced by their desire for a free outlet through both the Mississippi and the Lakes, that so long as commercial advantage continues to influence the policy of the states, they must and will decide against disunion. The friends of the Union, therefore, have a strong interest in this communication.”

When the election of 1826 came on, Cook was in very poor health. He was unable to carry on his campaign with the vigor which had marked his previous efforts. The Bond faction, thoroughly hopeless of success, would have let the election go by without bringing forward a candidate. McLean, Kane and Governor Bond had all been so thoroughly beaten, it seemed useless to urge a candidate against Cook. It was very much to the surprise of every one, when Joseph Duncan had the temerity to announce himself a candidate. The Bond faction took him up. He was a young merchant, a member of the State Senate, but not very well known. He went into the campaign with determination. He toured the State thoroughly, and spoke everywhere. He had been an original Jackson man, and his speeches favored the new leader. He was straightforward and earnest, and his speeches, though devoid of oratory, were full of sound common sense.¹ Edwards says that a betting man would not have staked one dollar to a hun-

¹ Davidson and Stuve: *History of Illinois*, 337.

dred on his chances against Cook.¹ It² was a great surprise to every one, both his followers and those of Cook, when he was elected. The vote stood 6,321 for Duncan, while Cook dropped to 5,680. Just why Cook was defeated it is hard to say. He made almost no effort in the campaign, it is true, but his exceeding popularity on former occasions should at least, it seems, have carried him with a small majority. Probably his Adams' vote influenced the election to some extent. Both Edwards and Cook were running for office, father for governor, and son-in-law for representative, the two most honorable gifts within the power of the State to bestow. Adams, in his *Memoirs*, says the defeat was due to Cook's supposed opposition to Benton's land scheme. In a letter written by Ninian Edwards to Henry Clay in September, 1826, he states the things which he believed were the causes of defeat. He says:

"You have doubtless long since heard of Mr. Cook's defeat, and seen it repeatedly attributed to the predominancy of General Jackson's interest in this State. But although the general's interest is considerable, and was not without its effect upon Mr. Cook's election, I can assure you it is very far from being predominant, at this time, and it never can be so if his most influential friends continue to oppose our canal. . . . How then, you may ask, did Mr. Cook lose his election? I will tell you. Both he and his friends felt too secure. None of them, with the exception of myself, could be induced to believe there was the least danger. His opponent did nothing for many months previously, but ride through the State, and visit the people at their own houses. Mr. Cook was confined by sickness, and could only visit a very few counties. The greatest possible efforts were made to turn to both his and my disadvantage, the circumstance of the father-in-law and the son-in-law being before the people at the same time for the two highest offices in their gift. But the circulation of thousands of hand bills, ingeniously contrived to produce the impression that both he and I voted against the reduction of

¹ Edwards: *History of Illinois*, 266.

² *Ibid.*

the price of public lands ,at a period too late to be answered or counteracted, had far more influence than all other considerations united. . . . The result has surprised everybody. The people are already disabused in regard to the land vote, and a powerful reaction has already taken place, and very many that opposed him are very anxious that he should become a candidate for the Senate. Should he do so, I think his election beyond all doubt.”¹

This election marked a change in Illinois politics.² From this time on the vote was for measures, not men. It was a common saying after election: “We did not intend to defeat Little Cook, but to lessen his majority, so as to make him feel his dependence upon us.”³ At all events, the defeat was a blow to the man, and probably hastened his death.

For the last two weeks of the session of Congress of 1826-7, Cook was confined to his home. He planned after the adjournment of the House, to go to Cuba, hoping in the milder climate there to regain his health. At this time a secret agent was needed at Havana. Cook was a good man for the place, both because of his talents, and because his going would arouse no suspicions, since it was well known that he was contemplating the visit. John Quincy Adams says in his diary that Cuba was then menaced with invasion by the forces of Mexico and Columbia, and, as information had come to him by a secret project of Canning, then British secretary of foreign affairs, Cook was intrusted with a confidential message to General Vives at Havana. He remained there till June, but, as his health was no better, he returned again to Edwardsville, Illinois, after having given a satisfactory reply to Mr. Clay, who had sent him on the mission.⁴ During the summer, Mr. Cook became more and more frail, till in August he started for his old home in Kentucky to spend his last days. There he died on October 16, 1827.⁵

¹ Edward's Papers, 260-1.

² Ford's History of Illinois, 74.

³ Edwards: History of Illinois, 266.

⁴ Adams: Memoirs, VIII, 20.

⁵ Edwards: History of Illinois, 267.

Cook's period of activity in politics was less than twelve years, yet in that time he accomplished more than many a man does in a long life-time. What he might have attained, had he lived to a greater age, it is useless to conjecture. He did enough during his few years to make him worthy of memory, as one of Illinois' greatest statesmen and to deserve the honor of having Illinois' most important County named for him. To him belongs credit, primarily, for the part he played in preserving Illinois as a free state, and in gaining for his section the grant for the Illinois-Michigan canal. But behind these measures was a man in the truest sense of the term. Reynolds says:¹ "Cook's popularity was founded as much on his urbanity of manner, his gentlemanly deportment, and benevolence of heart, as on his capacity for office, or on the policy of his measures."

¹ Reynolds: *My Own Times*, 256.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. SOURCE MATERIAL.

1. The most valuable source material at hand was the *Annals and Debates of Congress*, by Gales and Seaton, 1789 to 1837. The volumes reporting the debates of Congress 1819 to 1827, were especially used.
2. Next in importance were the Edwards' Papers. There are several letters of Cook himself included in the book, and frequent mention is made by Ninian Edwards and others, in other letters. Chicago Historical Society (Vol. III.) Edwards Papers, Chicago, 1884.
3. The *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams* contain frequent mention of Cook, and occasionally material of great importance is found there, and nowhere else. Such is the case with the Havana mission. Adams, J. Q.: *Memoirs*, Philadelphia, 1874, 12 volumes.
4. *Niles Weekly Register* contains much the same materials to be found in the *Annals of Congress*.
There are several books, particularly histories of Illinois, which were written in later years by men who lived contemporaneous with Cook, which throw great light upon his life. Notable among these are:
5. Ford, Thomas: *History of Illinois*, Chicago, 1854, pp. 29, 54, 55, 73, 74.
This book is valuable on account of the clear and usually accurate insight into the motives and actions of the public men during early state history. Ford is unique and interesting in his narration.
6. Reynolds, John: *Pioneer History of Illinois*, Belleville (Illinois) 1852. P. 332.
7. Reynolds, John: *My Own Times*, Illinois, 1855.
Reynolds' books, though not quite so valuable as Ford's *History*, contain much interesting and helpful material.

B. SECONDARY MATERIAL.

8. Brown, Henry: *History of Illinois*, New York, 1844.
9. Gerhard, Fred: *Illinois, As It Is*, Chicago, 1857, p. 64.
Neither of the last mentioned books contains much material, but what there is, is worth reading.
10. Edwards, Ninian Wirt: *History of Illinois, and Life and Times of Ninian Edwards, 1778—1833*, Springfield, 1870. P. 174, pp. 253-273.
Of all the secondary material, this book is the most valuable. Cook is mentioned often in the history itself, and, appended, is an extensive memoir by William H. Brown, fully supplemented with further remarks of valuable nature by the author. PP.253-273. While the younger Ninian Edwards was a little inclined to praise his brother-in-law to the fullest extent, his testimony to a large degree is reliable.

11. Next in value is *Moses, Illinois*, which devotes a large amount to Cook's life and work. Moses' view is perhaps somewhat less partial than that of Edwards.
Moses, John: *Illinois—Historical and Statistical*, 2 vols., Chicago, 1889-93. PP. 292, 294-5, 305, 312-13, 322, 341-2.
12. Davidson, Alexander. Stuve, Bernard: *Complete History of Illinois, 1673—1873*, Springfield, 1874. PP. 325, 336-7, 475.
This book is useful principally for the account of Cook's part in the Illinois-Michigan canal.
13. The publications of the Illinois State Historical Society contain a number of articles bearing upon Cook's work.
Publication No. 8 contains articles
 - a. *Forgotten Statesmen of Illinois*, by J. H. Burnham.
 - b. *The Attorneys-General of Illinois*, by Mason H. Newell.
 - c. *The Constitutional Conventions and Constitutions of Illinois*, by Adlai E. Stevenson.
 - d. *Decisive Events in the Building of Illinois*, by William H. Collins.
 - e. *Edward Coles, Second Governor of Illinois*, by Mrs. S. P. Wheeler.*Publication No. 9* contains
 - a. *Newspapers and Newspaper Men of Illinois*, by E. A. Snively.
 - b. *Illinois Legislation on Slavery and Free Negroes, 1818-1865*, by Mason M. Fishback.*Publication No. 10* contains an article on *Forgotten Statesmen of Illinois*, Hon. Conrad Will, by John F. Snyder.
Publication No. 11 contains a valuable article on *The Chicago Drainage Canal*, and its forbear, *The Illinois-Michigan Canal*, by Alexander J. Jones.
The articles above mentioned vary in authenticity, but as a general thing may be accepted as substantially correct.
Other books used for special details were:
 14. Snyder, J. F.: *Adam W. Snyder and His Period of Illinois History, Virginia (Illinois)*, 1906. PP. 47, 76.
 15. Gillespie, Joseph: *Recollections of Early Illinois*, Chicago, 1880, p. 14.
 16. Smith, George W.: *A Student's History of Illinois*, Carbondale, 1907.
 17. Washburne, E. B.: *Sketch of Edward Coles and the Slavery Struggle, 1823-4*. Chicago, 1882.
 18. Ferris, J. E.: *Thesis—A Study in Early Constitutional History of Illinois*, 1895.
 19. Harris, N. D.: *History of Negro Servitude in Illinois*, Chicago, 1904.
 20. Wilson, Henry: *Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America*.
 21. Turner, F. J. *Rise of the New West. The American Nation: A History*, Vol. 14. New York, 1906.